

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 19A

MIAMI HERALD  
16 April 1984

# CIA Actions in Nicaragua Revive Fears of the Past

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WHEN even Barry Goldwater complains that the CIA is running out of control, as he did the other day, it's time to worry.

The entire Congress exploded in outrage over the CIA's mining of Nicaragua's harbors, but Senator Goldwater's wrath was distinctive. It was not necessarily the covert action itself that he opposed; indeed, he was one of only 12 senators who refused to condemn the mining. No, what touched off Goldwater's legendary temper was that the CIA never bothered to tell him what it was doing.



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This is not mere yelping from a bruised senatorial ego. Goldwater is chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. As such, as a matter of law, he is supposed to be informed in advance about every CIA covert operation. This time, he wasn't.

In a letter dated April 9, he told CIA Director William Casey how he felt about being left in the dark. "It gets down to one little simple phrase," he said. "I'm pissed off."

Goldwater wrote that he had been assuring his fellow senators for days that the CIA was not mining the seas around Nicaragua. "I strongly denied it because I never heard of it. I found out the next day that the CIA had, with the written approval of the President, engaged in such mining, and the approval came in February!

"Bill, this is no way to run a railroad. . . . The

President has asked us to back his foreign policy. Bill, how can we back his foreign policy when we don't know what the hell he is doing? . . . Mine the harbors in Nicaragua? This is an act violating international law. It is an act of war. . . . I don't like this. I don't like it one bit."

Goldwater certainly is no ideological enemy of either Ronald Reagan or the CIA. Indeed, he is one of the CIA's most vigorous champions. He was a member of Sen. Frank Church's special committee that investigated abuses of power by U.S. intelligence agencies in 1975 and 1976. When that panel issued its 651-page report after 15 months of investigation, Goldwater was one of only two of the panel's 11 members who refused to sign it. He thought it went too far.

THAT gives Barry Goldwater a special credibility when he criticizes the CIA. That highlights what is perhaps the most worrisome aspect of this controversy: the CIA's refusal to keep its congressional watchdogs fully informed. This calls into question the effectiveness of congressional oversight of the CIA, which in turn reopens the issues raised by the Church Committee eight years ago.

That panel found that between 1961 and 1975, the CIA conducted some 900 major covert-action projects as well as several thousand smaller adventures. The committee considered recommending a ban on all covert activities, but thought better of it.

It hesitated in recognition that between the poles of diplomacy and war, there lies a vast, murky middle ground of challenges to a great nation's foreign interests. The vexing but real problems of international terrorism and subver-

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